Streamlining of PDS

242. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) the present status of Public Distribution System;

(b) the steps taken during the current year to streamline the PDS;

(c) whether PDS is catering to the needs of domestic requirement; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) The Public Distribution System (PDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and State Governments. The Central and State Government is responsible for the procurement and transportation of foodgrains up to the Principal Distribution Centres of the Food Corporation of India while the State Governments are responsible for the identification of families living Below the Poverty Line, the issue of Ration Cards and distribution of foodgrains to the beneficiaries through Fair Price Shops. The Central and the State Governments work in close coordination.

(b) Following measures have been taken by the Government for strengthening the Public Distribution System in the country:

(i) The Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001 has been issued on 31st August, 2001 under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 with a view to curb wilful adulteration, substitution, diversion, theft of stocks from the Central godown to Fair Price Shops and at the premises of the FPS etc.

(ii) A Task Force has been constituted to look into the irregularities in the implementation of the TPDS and Antyodaya Anna Yojana in the identified areas.

(iii) States/UTs have been asked to actively involve the Gram Panchayats in rural areas and local bodies in urban areas in the monitoring of Fair Price Shop as a measure of social audit.

(iv) A model Citizen's Charter has been issued to all the States/ UTs for adoption.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The PDS is supplemental in nature and does not envisage meeting the full requirements of foodgrains of any person or any class in full. However, the enhanced allocation of foodgrains fulfils around 50% of the cereal requirement every month for an average BPL household.

Reforms in Public Distribution System

243. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to review its food policy and carry out reforms in the existing Public Distribution System (PDS);

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what other steps are being taken to ensure that no section of the population is deprived of two square meals a day or face death due to starvation when the country is holding unprecedented amount of excess foodgrains year after year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) and (b) The reform of PDS to improve its efficiency and effectiveness is an ongoing process. The views and suggestions received from various quarters from time to time are taken into consideration while formulating policy. The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has been introduced in the year 1997 with the focus on the poor. Foodgrains are being provided to the families Below the Poverty Line (BPL) at subsidized rates. The Scale of issue, which was 10 kg. per family per month, was progressively increased to 35 kg. per family per month, w.e.f. 01.04.2002. Following measures have been taken by the Government for strengthening the Public Distribution System in the country:

(i) The Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001 has been issued on 31st August, 2001 under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 with a view to curb wilful adulteration, substitution, diversion, theft of stocks from the Central godown to Fair Price Shops and at the premises of the FPS etc.